
“FILL US WITH YOUR EUCHARIST”



It was a great pleasure for me to celebrate in our beautiful cathedral, the Sunday Eucharist marking the 27th edition of the Foire Brayonne, celebrated this year at the heart of the jubilee year of the 125 years of the Immaculate Conception Parish, and of the Year of the Eucharist. It is a most precious inheritance of faith that we are called to welcome, nourish, and transmit to those who come after us.

A MAJOR DIRECTIVE

When leaving for church with our parents for Sunday Mass, the most important directive we got from them was to thank the Lord for all we had received during the week. I believe that this helped develop in each of us a spirit of gratitude, the spirit that must blossom forth from the heart of every believer. The Lord has thought of us from all eternity, he loves us infinitely, so it is right and proper for us to bless him always, but especially on Sunday. A song of Robert Lebel reminds us of this directive: “From week to week may the feast continue, from Sunday to Sunday. With its white tablecloth, may the table be set for a sharing meal, the good bread of life, the good bread of love.”

AN ABUNDANCE OF GOODS

You know about the abundance of consumer goods that are available to us, or that are actually ours. We are grateful for our homes, transportation, food, and water which we have so abundantly in our country. Thank you, Lord, for the fish in our lakes and streams and rivers and seas. Thank you for our garden produce, for the fertility of our fields and forests. Thank you for the beauty of our environment, for our mountains, and our wheat fields. A comedian joked that there were not too many free things today, that it was even quite expensive to have a feel of the sun during the winter. It seems important to me that we take the time, once a week, to say a special thank you in our own words for everything that surrounds us, for everything that helps us live.

PROFESSION OF FAITH AND LOVE

The apostle Paul gives us a profession of faith and love, in his letter to the Romans: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? [I]n all this we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us” (Rom. 8:35, 37). And we know that the life of Saint Paul was not easy: he experienced trials and persecution, stoning, whipping, and imprisonment for a good part of his life, in the cause of Christ. Yet nothing could stop him from believing in God’s love for him. When an accident happens to us, however, when illness or mourning afflicts us, we are so easily shaken in our love of God! We even say, “What have I done to God, to be afflicted in this way?” And we begin doubting God’s love. We can sometimes say that this is a normal reaction but then, we must get a hold on ourselves and say, like Paul: “I am certain of this: neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Rm. 8:38-39). This is why it is good, from one week to the next, to express our gratitude to God for His continuing divine love.

FREE FOOD

In the gospels we see Jesus freely giving abundant food to over five thousand people. This story should stir in us constant gratitude not only for our daily bread, but also for the bread of life with which Jesus wants to relieve our hunger. This bread of life is such a wonder of love! Only God could have invented such a marvel. Only an eternal and everlasting love could create such a communion. You remember how, on Holy Thursday, “During the meal Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. ‘Take this and eat it,’ he said, ‘this

is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks and gave it to them. 'All of you must drink from it,' he said, 'for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Mt. 26:26-28). More than a remembrance and more than a narrative, our bread today and the Lord's great desire is that we, in turn, give the bread of love to all our friends.

A SPECIAL YEAR

Pope John Paul II wanted this year to be special, a year of the Eucharist, and he prayed that we rediscover the wonderful value of our Sunday gatherings. When we think about it, what our Sunday gatherings can bring to each and everyone of us is fantastic. We can of course use this time to reflect on the week gone by, to give thanks for all we have received, for all the contacts made, for the life given, but we can also consider where we are in our love of God. In exchange for His infinite love for us, we are invited to love Him with all our hearts, our strength, and our spirit. And it is good to meet brothers, sisters, and friends, and to greet visitors. The Sunday gathering is a time of infinite richness. Even the plainest celebration can be an occasion to praise God, to thank Him for His Word and His Eucharist, and to gradually discover the great mystery of Christ and his Church.

+ François Thibodeau

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

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